

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: September 5, 2023
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Ana Kwong – Administrative Services Director
Marin IT Consultant
Subject: City of Sebastopol Migration to DOT.GOV
Recommendation: Informational Item Only
Funding: Currently Budgeted: Yes No Not Applicable

Account Code: 100-14-10-4210

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes (Finance Initialed AK) No (Finance Exempt)

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:

The item is informational only

BACKGROUND:

On June 27, 2023, City staff sent a letter to request that responsibility for the domain name sebastopol.gov be delegated to our agency. The following day, city staff received an email from Registrar office that the domain name does not meet the naming convention for city/county level domain names which calls for the state identifier to be present in the domain name. To conform to the Naming Convention, Registrar office suggested reconsidering the domain name, e.g. SEBASTOPOLCA.GOV, SEBASTOPOL-CA.GOV, SEBASTOPOLCALIFORNIA.GOV or similar. Registrar office also allows agency to request an exception to the suggested Naming Convention. However, the final decision on the domain approval/rejection will remain at the CISA's (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) discretion. In an effort to keep the migration to .gov to a minimal impact, staff requested to maintain the cityofsebastopol domain name and only added .gov at the end.

On July 21, 2023, city staff received an email notification from registrar@dotgov.gov approved cityofsebastopol.gov as the domain name of our agency.

What drives the City to change from .org and .com (Sebastopol Police) to .gov domain is because it's more secure and make it more difficult for malicious actors and scammers to co-opt government websites. Using .gov and increasing trust that government communications are authentic will improve our collective cybersecurity. The public see a .gov website or email address and know they are interacting with an official, U.S. based government organization.

DISCUSSION:

Every year since 2003, October has been recognized as Cyber Security Awareness Month (CSAM). This effort was brought to life through a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance. Since 2004, the President of the United States and Congress have declared October to be CSAM,

helping individuals protect themselves online as threats to technology and confidential data become more commonplace. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the National Cybersecurity Alliance (NCA) lead a collaborative effort between government and industry to raise cybersecurity awareness nationally and internationally. Therefore, making this transition during the month of October is not only appropriate but also cements the path for the City to be secure in the years to come.

Most government organizations that want to register a .gov domain name have already established an online website or email address – at a non-.gov domain like .org or .us. or .com (specifically Sebastopol Police). Moving to .gov is not solely a technical task, although there are some important technological considerations. Given the diversity of organizational types and underlying IT infrastructure of our agency, the outline below is somewhat general. The following transition plan content is developed as a tentative plan for this migration. This is by no means is set in stone and subject to change once staff start working on the transition.

- Marin IT’s recommendation is to send notification of .GOV domain name change at least 60 days prior to live implementation to begin socializing the proposed change and to allow impacted users time to prepare.
- Consider sending follow-up reminders 30 days, 7 days, and 1 day prior to the cutover date (tentatively October 2023).
- Consider adding this information to email signatures for all city employees to alert external contacts of the coming change.
- Marin IT will manage the technical requirements of the deployment; the city is responsible for managing the process and communications.
- Our internal and external contacts will want to know the following in simple terms:
 - **WHAT** is happening and expected of them – *The City of Sebastopol is transitioning from .org domain name to .gov domain name.*
 - **WHY** the change is happening – *As mentioned above because it’s more secure and make it more difficult for malicious actors and scammers to co-opt government websites.*
 - **WHEN** this is happening – *tentatively planned for October 2023*
 - **WHO** will be impacted – *all departments (City Council, City Administration, Administrative Services, Planning, Building, Fire, Police & Public Works)*
 - **HOW** will they be impacted – *user email address will change from username@cityofsebastopol.org to username@cityofsebastopol.gov*

Sample communication: The City of Sebastopol is excited to announce that we will be moving to a new .gov domain name, cityofsebastopol.gov. This change will make it easier for the public to identify our official communications and will give them greater confidence that any information they receive from us is legitimate. We will be implementing this change on (date – tentatively October 2023). We want to assure everyone that our old domain name will continue to work for a period of time to avoid any disruptions, but we will be using cityofsebastopol.gov for our website, our email and all communications, going forward from (date – October 2023).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The proposed action is exempt Yes No from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

GOALS:

This action supports the following City Council Goals and General Plan Actions:

Goal 1 – Maintain the long term financial stability and sustainability of the City of Sebastopol and Operate City government in a fiscally responsible and responsive manner.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, staff anticipates receiving public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report. Such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost of this migration is estimated to be \$5,165. Cost will be absorbed into the current fiscal year contract as it was approved by the City Council on July 18,2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Sebastopol City Council to receive this item as informational only.

Attachments:

None